

3. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the non-planar surface comprises a contoured portion that provides a compressed shape of the compressible layer that approximately corresponds with an anticipated shape of the portion of the user's body.

4. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the non-planar surface comprises a contoured portion having a radius of curvature within the range from approximately 1.5 inches to approximately 7.0 inches.

5. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the first surface comprises a concave portion adapted to engage a portion of the user's body.

6. (Amended) A pad assembly for an exercise machine, comprising:
a compressible layer having a first surface adapted to engage a portion of a user's body and a second surface opposite from the first surface; and
a backing member having a non-planar surface engaged with the second surface of the compressible layer, and wherein the non-planar surface of the backing member is shaped to provide an approximately uniform-thickness portion of the compressible layer when a compression force is applied to the first surface during an exercise.

8. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the non-planar surface of the backing member is shaped to provide an approximately uniform-pressure portion when a compression force is applied to the first surface during an exercise.

9. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the backing member comprises a coupling assembly adapted to attach to an exercise machine.

10. (Amended) The pad assembly of claim 6 wherein the backing member comprises a contoured backing plate.